

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC Saint Patrick's Cathedral, Lady Chapel, Rectory and Cardinal's Residence
AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER Fifth Avenue between E. 50th Street and E. 51st St. NOT FOR PUBLICATION
CITY, TOWN New York CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT 18th
STATE New York VICINITY OF CODE COUNTY New York CODE 10022

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC ACQUISITION	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME St. Patrick's Cathedral; His Eminence Cardinal Cooke
STREET & NUMBER 452 Madison Avenue
CITY, TOWN New York VICINITY OF STATE New York 10022

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Department of Records
STREET & NUMBER New York County City Hall
CITY, TOWN New York STATE New York

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE New York Landmarks Commission
DATE
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS 305 Broadway
CITY, TOWN New York STATE New York
FEDERAL STATE ☒ COUNTY LOCAL

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

☒ EXCELLENT ___ DETERIORATED
___ GOOD ___ RUINS
___ FAIR ___ UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

☒ UNALTERED
___ ALTERED

CHECK ONE

☒ ORIGINAL SITE
___ MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Saint Patrick's is described by Robert Broderick thus:

"A well known and well loved landmark of New York City is the famous St. Patrick's Cathedral, probably the most famous Catholic church in the United States. It occupies a city block bounded by Fifth and Madison Avenues and Fiftieth and Fifty-first Streets. It is the seat of the Roman Catholic Archbishopric of New York.

"The history of the Cathedral is an interesting one. In 1643 the first Catholic priest, the Jesuit martyr St. Isaac Jogues, entered Manhattan seeking to convert the Mohawk Indians. He was welcomed by the Dutch Governor, William Kieft, and by the Dutch settlers of Nieuw Amsterdam. His mission work flourished, but the first Catholic Church of the city, St. Peter's was not erected until 1785.

"The site of the present St. Patrick's Cathedral was purchased in 1810, with the intention of building a college. In 1850 it was proposed that a cathedral be built, and in 1853 Archbishop John Hughes instructed the architect James Renwick to prepare the studies and designs. The cornerstone was laid in 1858. During the Civil War years construction was suspended, but finally the work was completed, except for the spires, in 1879. The spires were finished in 1888, the Lady Chapel in 1906.

"The continental aspect of St. Patrick's is evident mainly in its exterior and plan. The three-portal facade with its great rose window is distinctly French, while the "stone lace" ornamentation of the tapered twin spires combines French and German elements. The plan, with shallow transepts and ambulatory, follows the classic French pattern. The interior, however, is generally English Decorated in its detailing and is dominated by magnificent English stellar vaulting rising 112 feet to the ridge rib.

"Architecturally, the Cathedral is patterned after the Gothic style common in Europe from the thirteenth to the fifteenth centuries. Cologne and Rheims and some English cathedrals may be said to have furnished a prototype from which Mr. Renwick, an associate of Ralph Adams Cram, drew his inspiration for the distinctive design of St. Patrick's.

"The foundation stones of the building are huge blocks of blue gneiss granite laid to ground level in cement mortar. A natural rock ledge rises nearly to the surface of Fifth Avenue, where the Cathedral's front entrance is situated; this ledge slopes east to a point some twenty feet below the surface of the south transept. Above the ground line, the first exterior base course of masonry is of Dix Island granite obtained from quarries in Maine. This granite also constitutes the first stone course under the columns and marble wall surfaces of the interior of the Cathedral.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD		AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES 1858 - 1878 BUILDER/ARCHITECT James Renwick, Jr. (1818-1895)

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Grace Church in New York had firmly established Renwick's reputation and led to other commissions; ultimately he was given the design of St. Patrick's which climaxed his career. It is a mature statement of the Gothic Revival on a grand scale--the first enormous medieval church in America.

"The Only Proper Style," describes the history of the structure:

"That the most influential Roman Catholic archdiocese in the country should select a Protestant architect to execute its seat and symbol is illustrative of Renwick's skill and renown. The commission for the biggest church building erected in the United States up to that time was somewhat overwhelming, but Renwick deftly produced a suitably majestic scheme.

"His plans, begun in 1853, called for a building combining French, German, and English elements; the diverse nationalities represented in the diocese dictated that he divagate from the strictly English format to which he had adhered in previous designs. Although a direct connection has not been established, Renwick may have derived inspiration from the markedly similar Sainte-Clotilde, a large church in Paris begun in 1846 under the aegis of architect F. C. Gau, a German trained under a French master. A landmark of continental Gothic Revival, Sainte-Clotilde was a popular model for large Catholic churches, well known in Catholic circles, and Renwick may have been steering a safe course by generally acknowledging a design that had already met the approval of the hierarchy.

"The Cathedral was formally opened in 1879 and the spires, completed in 1888, dominated mid-town Manhattan's skyline for some fifty years until dwarfed by Rockefeller Center just across Fifth Avenue. Since its opening St. Patrick's has served in the fullest sense as a great urban cathedral. A cool haven from the aggressive commercialism without, the cavernous interior is always gently astir with the flickering of banks of candles, the murmur of masses, and the coming and going of tourists and the devout. In addition to its day-to-day service it provides a matchless setting for great religious ceremonies, from the funerals of national figures to the visit of a reigning Pope. The late Cardinal Francis J. Spellman expressed its essence: 'The grandeur of this holy place has lifted up the lowly and taught humility to the mighty. At its portals, the world seems left behind.'

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

1. Broderick, Robert, Historic Churches of the United States, Wilfred Funk, Inc., New York, 1958
2. Loth, Calder and Sadler, Julius, The Only Proper Style, New York Graphic, Boston, 1975
3. Coolidge, John Phillips, Honors Thesis, 1935, Unpublished, Harvard University

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY approximately 2 acres

UTM REFERENCES

A 18 58.640.0 4.51.22.5.0
ZONE EASTING NORTHING
C

B
ZONE EASTING NORTHING
D

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The St. Patrick's Church complex, including Cathedral, Lady Chapel, rectory and cardinal's residence occupies a full city block and is bounded by Fifth and Madison Avenues, Fiftieth and Fifty-first Streets

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Carolyn Pitts, Architectural Historian

August 1976

ORGANIZATION

DATE

Historic Sites Survey, National Park Service

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

1100 L Street, NW.

523-5464

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

Washington,

D. C.

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL ____

STATE ____

LOCAL ____

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

TITLE

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
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"The whole exterior wall fabric is white marble, most of which was quarried at Pleasantville, New York. These walls are backed with brick and stone, rough masonry with hollow spaces to prevent dampness and aid ventilation. They are so well constructed that to this day no cracks have appeared in them."¹

John Coolidge, although not enthusiastic about the design of St. Patrick's, does give us the following information:

"It was originally planned to be 322' long, 172' across the transepts, and 100' high. The design was cut down by omitting the ambulatory. As it stands, it is 332' long without the Lady Chapel, 174' across the transepts, and with towers 330' high, exterior dimensions, and a vault 112' high on the interior. The height of the western gable is 156' and the rose window is 26' in diameter. It was constructed of stone and brick and on the insistence of Renwick it was faced with marble.

"The vaults of the Cathedral are in plaster, which was insisted upon despite the architect's protests and the fact that the buttresses were designed to carry a stone vault.

"Because of his great New York commissions, Grace, Calvary, and St. Patrick's, many people think of James Renwick as second only to Richard Upjohn in this period of the Gothic Revival. But he never received anything like the contemporary recognition awarded to Upjohn, and before 1859 he was certainly less important than the now almost forgotten Frank Wills. To a very great extent he was the artistic heir of Miniard Lafever whose taste for the florid, the flamboyant he successfully academized.

"As Trinity is a splendid reflection of the canonical English Gothic Revival church, so St. Patrick's is a splendid example of the standard large scale Gothic Revival church of the continent. The new facades of Cologne Cathedral and St. Ouen, Rouen, Ferstel's votive church in Vienna (1853-1879), and Ballau's St. Clothilde in Paris (1846-1859), all, like St. Patrick's, were florid buildings with the conventional arrangement of triple doorways, triple groups of windows, and finally two tall octagonal towers crowned with tall openwork spires. St. Patrick's is easily comparable to the others." The church is unique in America.²

1. Broderick, Robert, Historic Churches of the United States, Wilfred Funk, Inc., New York, 1958, pp. 152-154
2. Coolidge, John P., Honors Thesis, 1935, Unpublished, Harvard University, pp. 182-184

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"St. Patrick's occupies a special place in American Gothic Revival, for it marks the first project in this country of a magnitude comparable to anything being done in Europe. With it the United States emerged from its provincial status in the Revival and took its place in the front rank. Although sometimes accused of a certain stiffness, Renwick's masterpiece demonstrates that Americans were capable of accomplishing work of a high order and on the grandest scale, opening the way for such awesome projects the the Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine and the Washington Cathedral."1

The immense building took more than thirty years to complete--the spires were finally added in 1887 when American architecture had moved in other directions but the ecclesiological gothic style lasted for three quarters of a century in this country.

1. Loth, Calder and Sadler, Julius, The Only Proper Style, New York Graphic, Boston, 1975

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Photographs and Their Descriptions

Location: St. Patrick's Cathedral, New York City

Photo credit: Museum of the City of New York

Photos: 1. (Charles Pollock) 1880 with St. John's Church in rear left.

2. St. Patrick's under construction